

The regularly scheduled Selectmen's meeting was called to order by the Chair, at 7:00pm. Those present included Jack Steiner, Lloyd Sullivan (Selectmen), and Russell McAllister (Town Administrator).

The Selectmen reviewed the meeting minutes of March 13th. Mr. Steiner made the motion to accept the regular minutes of March 13th. Mr. Steiner also seconded the motion noting that Mr. Lagassa was absent for the March 13th meeting and that Mr. Hines was no longer on the Board. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

The selectmen reviewed correspondence and/or signed:

Administration/Business

- a. Minutes - March 13th
- b. Payroll
- c. Manifest
- d. Yield Tax Warrant - \$437.07
- e. Land Use Change Tax - \$3,239.83

Mr. Lagassa questioned whether the implicit price paid for the subject land (12+/- acres for \$32,390) was an accurate measure of its true value and suggested this should be revisited in the future.

- f. Executive Council Newsletter
- g. Coakley Minutes
- h. Media One Correspondence
- i. Winnicutt River Monitoring Data
- j. RPC - Transportation Enhancements

Mr. Lagassa noted that it was a pleasure serving with Allen Hines on the Board and that he looked forward to working with Mr. Sullivan. Mr. Lagassa explained that it was a tradition of sorts to pass the Chair to the next senior Selectmen every a year. The Chair passed to Mr. Steiner. The Board accepted the following Committee assignments; Mr. Lagassa (Conservation), Mr. Steiner (Budget Committee), Mr. Sullivan (Planning Board).

Governmental Issues

Peter Simmons

Mr. Simmons addressed those in attendance expressing his strong concern for fair and impartial treatment by the Board of Selectmen in general and Mr. Steiner in particular. Although he did not make any specific charges, Mr. Simmons alleged that Mr. Steiner had been prejudicial to Mr. Simmons' family and a project coming before the Planning Board. Mr. Simmons noted that he had been in Town 54 years and never had his character and that of his family been so impugned. Mr. Simmons claimed that he was speaking for everyone in Town by addressing the issue of fair and equitable treatment by the Board. Several people in attendance announced that Mr. Simmons was not speaking for them and they took exception to his claim. Mr. Simmons noted that he had overheard Mr. Steiner engaged in a conversation with the Building Inspector regarding a project of his that was scheduled to come before the Planning Board that same evening. Mr. Simmons took exception to Mr. Steiner's remarks and believed that it was an attempt to influence the outcome of his project. Jenifer Landman commented that the Building Inspector was not allowed to vote on proposals and therefore she did not see how Mr. Steiner influenced the outcome of a Planning Board decision by talking with and expressing an opinion about the project. Mr. Lagassa noted that the Planning Board approved Mr. Simmons' project that same evening and that Mr. Steiner had recused himself and not voted. Numerous points of order were made, references to the Town's code of ethics were also made. Mr. Lagassa noted that if the alleged charge was slander that it was serious, but he asked what

the facts were. He requested that Mr. Simmons put into writing his allegations so that the Selectmen could know better the facts of the situation and determine whether or not any violation of law or ethics had been committed. Mr. Simmons refused to do so and replied that Mr. Steiner had violated his oath of office. Mr. Sullivan asked Mr. Simmons if Mr. Steiner had discussed Mr. Simmons' project or his family. Mr. Simmons said both. Rick Crowley opined that there could be trouble when a Selectmen goes into a subordinate's office. John Simmons noted that it was the appearance of conflict and as such the public trust was at issue and that he was speaking for everyone. He indicated his opinion that trying to influence the Building Inspector at that level of debate was despicable. Jill Brandt took umbrage with claims that Mr. Simmons was speaking for everyone, noting that he did not speak for her. Mr. Lagassa noted that Mr. Steiner was visibly embarrassed by the charges, and he asked Mr. Simmons what action he expected given that no specific charges had been made and no evidence presented. Mr. Sullivan echoed the same thought. Mr. Simmons responded that it was clear what Mr. Steiner had to do. Mr. Lagassa asked Mr. Simmons what charges he was alleging. Mr. Simmons replied that Mr. Steiner had acted inappropriately. Mr. Steiner commented that he had talked with the Building Inspector regarding the project, but that he was not in any way trying to influence the outcome of a decision or influence the Building Inspector. Any statement Mr. Simmons may have overheard was not meant to impugn his or his family's name. Shirley Carter stated that she felt it best to leave the Building Inspector out of the issue. Mr. Sullivan suggested that much had been heard and discussed, but that it was time to move on to other business. He suggested that the Selectmen needed time to consider the allegations before any further action could be taken.

Recreation Director Position

Bert Garry, discussion of position and date of hire.

Mr. Garry and Jill Brandt addressed the Board concerning the timing and hiring of a Recreation Director. Mr. Garry noted that an ad for the position as well as a position description would need to be put together soon. He explained that the level of pay would appeal to a younger person graduating from college with a recreation degree. Placing an ad in the paper or posting the job announcement on local campuses should be done prior to the end of the school semester. Mr. Sullivan asked who would be doing the interviewing. Mr. Garry replied that it would be members from the Recreation Commission, North Hampton Youth Association, Board of Selectmen members and the Town Administrator. Ms. Brandt noted that the Recreation Director would be a Department level position. Day to day supervision of the Recreation Director would be the responsibility of the Town Administrator who in turn reports to the Board of Selectmen. It was noted that an Advisory Board comprised of Recreation Commission and Youth Association members would provide Board oversight for the position. It was certainly new territory and the various relationships between Youth Association, Rec. Commission and Board of Selectmen would need to be established. The duties of the position were pretty well known but they still required written form. The Board recommended that the Youth Association and the Recreation Commission draft a position description and position announcement as a first step.

Subcommittee for the Preservation of Open Space

Roland Neves, discussion of establishment of the above.

Mr. Neves addressed the Board regarding the formation of a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission to study the feasibility of the Town owning and purchasing developable land. Mr. Neves pointed out that residential land is the most costly in terms of providing municipal services. Open space land does not require the same level of municipal services. Mr. Neves proposed that the study committee research the issue for a year, conduct an inventory of undeveloped land and submit their recommendation on which parcels should be bought. Recommendations would be introduced in time for the March 2001 Town Meeting. Mr. Neves noted that he would be conducting an estate workshop after Labor Day to demonstrate how gifts of land provide tax benefits to an estate plan. Mr. Sullivan made the motion to approve the formation of a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission for a limited term with an established scope of work and comprised of the following; Bob Field, Charles Gordon, Tim Harned,

Roland Neves, Phil Wilson, Dick Wollmar, and Selectmen George Lagassa. Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

Selectmen's Issues

Library Disbursements

Mr. Sullivan made the motion to approve funding the library in 12 equal amounts beginning with the new fiscal year, as was a previous practice. Mr. Steiner explained that current practice was for the library to submit an approved manifest for any amount approved by the Library Trustees. Mr. Sullivan noted that the Library Trustees were responsible for the money. The TA noted that the Board was ultimately responsible for all cash receipts. Mr. Lagassa noted that Allen Hines felt strongly about the issue, but that if 12 equal installments were easier for the library then why not. Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

Back-up system administrator

Mr. Sullivan expressed concern that should the TA be killed in a car accident there would be no back-up network system administrator. The TA explained that there were two LANs, one at the Town Office (Netware 5x) and the other for the Fire and Police Department (NT 4). The TA noted that a Netware system operator's manual currently existed and that office staff knew how to power up and power down the server. More complex tasks such as server configuration and client configuration could always be performed by outside contractors. The TA agreed to provide more training for existing staff.

Discussion of Personnel Policy - Tabled

7x24 Server Access for Town Clerk & Tax Collector

Mr. Sullivan noted that he thought is necessary for the Clerk and Tax Collector to have 24-hour access to the system. The TA explained that weekend access had previously been arranged so that proper back-ups could be performed to prevent potential data loss. Due to a lack of available technical staff, the possibility of extended periods of electrical outage and extremes in temperature during the weekend the server had not been available. The TA agreed to implement 24x7x365 access.

Budget Review

Mr. Sullivan asked whether certain line items within the budget could not be cleaned-up. He noted that the salary item for the planning and zoning secretary was overdrawn under planning and zoning. The TA agreed that the line item for that activity was overdrawn and explained that it would be better to transfer funds from one account to another at the end of the year. In this way it would be easier to see how much needed to be transferred thus avoiding additional future transfers for the same item. The auditors also tracked transfer activity and moving things once made it easier for them to track and ultimately reduced auditing costs. It was also explained that the budget was a bottom line budget and that individual line items could be overspent or under spent so long as the total operating budget expenditure was not exceeded.

Office Space for Elected Officials

Mr. Sullivan noted that there was a lack of office space for elected officials and that he wanted to have a place for a desk in the Selectmen's Office because he intended to spend time there. It was noted that there was not much in the way of available space anywhere in the Town Offices. The TA noted that he was by default located in the Selectmen's old office which, contained town files, assessing records, a kitchenette, rows of filing cabinets, the server, the printers, the fax and postage machine, a place for the Assessor and Town Administrator to work. Mr. Sullivan wanted space so as to be available to the citizens. Mr. Lagassa noted that there was space over in the old Town Hall that could serve as a Selectmen's Office. Mr. Sullivan reiterated his need to be available to the citizens. Mr. Lagassa noted that he was always available to citizens at his home and that he had often been contacted there. He did not feel it necessary to have space in the

Town Office in order to effectively serve. Mr. Steiner noted that if in order to serve as a Selectman one was required to have office hours at the Town Office, then only retired individuals would have the opportunity to serve. Mr. Steiner noted that Selectmen must act as a collegial body and not as individuals. The TA commented that he would move his reference library back home and place a desk for Mr. Sullivan in the spot where the bookcases were now located.

Discussion of SBAC

Mr. Sullivan expressed concern over the relationship of the Town Administrator working for the Town and sitting on the Seacoast Business Alliance Corporation's Board of Directors. He noted that the Town got money from the State and that it was funneled to the SBAC, and he was uncomfortable with the potential for conflict and liability. The TA noted that at no time was any money funneled anywhere. The TA explained that he had applied for a CDBG economic development grant in 1998 with the permission of the Board of Selectmen. There had been a public hearing regarding the grant application, which is a federal requirement and is also required by the NH Office of State Planning. The grant created a Regional Development Corporation (SBAC) whose mission was to create jobs, attract and retain businesses in the Seacoast area. The TA noted that the commercial/industrial portion of the tax base in North Hampton was approximately 15% (down from 17% for the previous year) whereas the residential portion represented 83%. The lack of diversity in the tax base would make it difficult to maintain a stable tax rate during the downside of the business cycle. The grant and the SBAC were designed to strengthen Seacoast businesses in general, and diversify the North Hampton tax base in particular. It was also pointed out that the commercial/industrial portion of the tax base required fewer higher cost municipal services like schools. The TA pointed out that he did not have to sit on the SBAC Board of Directors, but that one of the Board members should be on the SBAC Board. North Hampton needed to be at the table to take advantage of any opportunities as well as to have a part in any decisions that may benefit the Seacoast Area. The TA explained that there were numerous checks and balances and oversight bodies, including the Office of State Planning, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the SBAC Board of Directors, Donna Lane (CDBG Grant Administrator for the Town), the voluminous 4" binder "CDBG Implementation Guide", semi annual progress reports and annual audits.

Questions & Comments

Grant Seaverns noted that the Town Report was missing the school board representatives to the SAU. Grant Seaverns was the North Hampton Representative on the Winnacunnet Coop Budget Committee. Alison Robie was the North Hampton School Board representative to the Winnacunnet Coop. Mr. Landman mentioned that he and Bill Carlson were RPC Commissioners. Ms. Landman noted that Heritage Commission members were appointed though not yet sworn in. Robert Strout noted that the Brush Dump would be open April 1st, from 8am until noon.

There being no further business to come before the Board the public meeting adjourned at approximately 10:00pm. Mr. Lagassa made the motion to convene in non-public session under RSA91-A:3 II (a) to discuss personnel issues. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

Respectfully,

Russell McAllister
Town Administrator